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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, March 9, 1942

SUBJECT: "Notes on Growing a Victory Garden." Information from plant scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Even if you've been growing vegetables these 50 years or more, you'll still find that planning the garden pays. And this wartime year a careful plan is most important. This year the country needs many more vegetables than ever before--- this year every seed is precious, and no fertilizer or spray materials can go to waste. This year you need to plan to get the most out of your seed, soil, fertilizer, spray material, tools and time.

So today here are some last-minute planning tips to help you make your garden a real victory garden.

To begin with, you need to plan on a garden of the right size. The size depends, first of all, on how much ground you can care for. A small plot well kept is much better than a big one neglected. On the other hand, you want to allow yourself enough space to raise vegetables to best advantage. A man who must do all his gardening after working hours Saturday afternoon will be wise not to plan for a garden larger than about 30 by 50 feet, unless his family can help with the garden work. A garden 30 by 50 can yield enough fresh vegetables to supply the average family all season and some extra for canning. A garden 30 by 50, or 30 by 100 you can work by hand. But when the garden gets up around 100 by 150 feet in size, then you'll need to work it with a horse or a small garden tractor, unless, of course, it's a cooperative garden with many hands making light work.

Now the size of your garden will decide somewhat the kind of vegetables you plant. In a small garden your best choices are the vegetables that give the most food value for the space they take up in the garden. In a small garden you'll want



to plan for beans of different kinds. (Beans give a lot of nourishment for their keep). And you'll want to plan for tomatoes, and maybe green peppers because these plants bear so heavily. (Lots of the vitamins C and A in tomatoes and green peppers as well as lots of flavor.) You'll also want to plan for plenty of the leafy vegetables--chard, collards, kale, turnip greens, cabbage, lettuce and so on. These vegetables are most valuable and easy to grow. You should have some leafy vegetable ready in the garden from early spring on to severe fall freezing weather. Still other good choices to include in your small-garden plans are the root vegetables--carrots, turnips, radishes, onions, and beets. Beets, carrots and onions help out family meals not only during the summer, when they're in the garden, but later when they're stored in the cellar. Then there's that old reliable vegetable, the parsnip, so convenient because you can leave it right in the ground all winter.

The crops that take up a great deal of space in a small garden are potatoes and sweetpotatoes, and the vines like melons, and squash, and cucumber. Green peas and sweet corn take up considerable ground, too, but you may want them anyway because their flavor is so fine when they're just fresh from the garden.

One reason for planning your garden carefully with pencil and paper before you plant is to make sure you're going to have a variety of vegetables all season long. One great mistake of beginning gardeners and careless gardeners is planting so they have too much one time, and not enough, or none at all, another time. One week they'll be swamped with greens--more than they can eat. The next week no greens are ready in the garden. That sort of hit-and-miss is hard on family meals and family appetites.

Plan and plant so that your vegetables will keep coming just enough at a time. One way to arrange this is to buy seeds of early varieties, midseason varieties, and late varieties and plant them accordingly. Another way is to plan for succession crops and companion crops. A third way is to start seeds early in



the house. In northern States especially you must start seeds indoors if you want to get the most tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, early cabbage and cauliflower. And March is a good month to start indoor plantings.

Now here are a couple of notes about how to plant. If possible, have the rows in the garden run north and south to avoid shading small plants between rows. Arrange your garden this way: Put in the first plantings of small and early vegetables along the south or east side of the garden and plant later crops in this order across the garden area. This helps avoid confusion and damage to the earlier sowings. To be sure that tall-growing crops won't shade the small ones, put them on the north or west side of the garden.

Now for one last note: You are welcome to a copy of a new garden leaflet just being published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. for the new leaflet called "Victory Gardens." It is free to all gardeners while the supply lasts.

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